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A VOYAGE

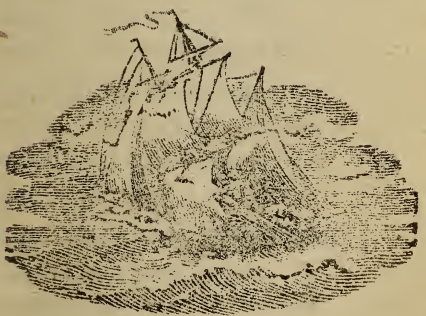
IN THE

COAL TRADE;

WITH

AN ADDRESS TO SEAMEN,

ESPECIALLY THE RISING YOUTH.



NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE:
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VOYAGE IN THE COAL TRADE.

Our ship's now loaded, the deck's all clear,
But still lays moored in the tier.

The captain he then comes on board,
With all the dignity of a lord—
"Well, John, you are all load I see,
But she looks very bold to me.

"I think the measure still grows worse,
The coal trade won't be worth a curse—
Did she take all the two-and-twenty?"
"Yes, sir, and there was plenty!"

"John, have you got on board the ale and beer?
I'll change our brewer, if I live, next year;
His beer he makes so very small;
His ale, I'm sure, won't keep at all.

"I expect you will all ready be,
For at high water she must go to sea,
If wind or steam can take her out,
And go she must there's not a doubt."

"Oh, the———ahoy!" the pilot cries,
As under the ship's bow he lies;
The captain then looks o'er the bows,
When the following dialogue ensues:

All sails now set the breeze to catch,
We clear the decks, and set the watch;
One half on deck the watch to keep,
The other half, below, in hammocks sleep.

"Well, sir, all ready for sea?
Tully can't get, so has sent me;
If you think of going, let's begin,
It's time you had your stern rope in."

"She won't sail out, the wind's too shy,
But we must have her out and try;
The wind looks as if it would be
All from the north-east at sea."

"So come, my lads, and let's be at her,
We'll have a steam-boat, where's the matter?
"Sea! certainly, pilot, there's no doubt,
We won't lay here if we can get out."

Our ship's now hove out of the tier,
At single anchor lays all clear;
The steam-boat then she heaves a-head,
And by a warp the ship doth lead.

Our anchor then hove to the bow,
With cat and fish the same to stow,
"Come, lay aloft, my lads, hurra,
Your yard-arm gasket, too, let go.

"Hold fast your bunts, let go your gear,
For sheeting home set all things clear,"
With rapid pace the vessel goes,
Nor cares which way the wind it blows.

The wind at north, a pleasant gale,
Below the Middens we must sail,

"Ste m-boat, ahoy! let go the warp,
Come, haul it in, my lads, look sharp."

The ship is now safely out at sea,
The pilot then discharged must be,
"Now, sir, I'll thank you for my note?
Brace the yards by, haul up the boat—

You know, sir, what you mostly pay,
You'll make it square money, I dare say."
The pilot now has got his note,
With haste he steps into the boat.

"I wish you a good passage, sir, good bye!"
"Thank you, pilot," they reply.
The captain than takes the command,
And on the quarter-deck does stand.

"Square away your yards, my lads, right square,
And all your steering-sail gear prepare;
Look sharp, my lads, come, bear a hand,
Set every steering-sail that will stand."

The boys sloft the haulyards reeve,
The mate on deck the same receive;
The men the steering-sail booms rig out,
With all the haste they can, no doubt.

She rolls along, the wind keeps fair;
The night's not dark, there's little care;
The morning comes, 'tis eight o'clock,
They call the watch—on deck they knock.

Each man who has tea and sugar got,
He makes the first board to find his pot;
Which, if not boiled, the boys they known,
That they to leeward soon would go!

The captain wakes—"You boy," he cries.
"I'm coming, sir," the boy replies.
"Come, boy, look sharp, the coffee make,
And tell the cook to fry me a steak.

"Set the cold beef out for the mate;
And put me some butter on a plate."
The boy moves as quick as he is able,
And sets all things upon the table.

He views the beef with anxious eyes,
That some is gone he soon espies.
"You boy," says he, "it's my belief,
That you have eat some of this beef."

"Aw've never touched it, sir, not I,
Aw've sure aw would not tell a lie;
The piece you cut me for my tea
Was plenty, quite enough for me."

"Then, d—n you, tell me who its been,
That it is gone is plainly seen,
It's not been rats, I'm sure of that,
And I'm as sure it's not the cat.

"So speak at once, the truth's let's have,
If your bask you wish to save."

In the middle watch, last night,
It was not dark, it was moonlight—
"I saw the mate come down below,
And eat about three pound or so;
And then on deck he eat the same—
I knew that I should get the blame."

"Curse his guts, the gormandizer!
But no, I never shall be wiser;
If my beef I wish to save it,
I under lock and key must have it."

The mate on deck does little know,
How bets are going on below;
Unconscious when the message sent,
And to breakfast table went.

Sees all's not right—some sad disaster,
Has enraged his lord and master;
His sullen looks his heavy frown,
When at the table he sat down.

He dare not ask what is the reason,
The very thought would be high treason
But scarce had ta'en his cup in hand,
Ere he received this reprimand:—

"It's a most surprising thing to me,
That people who have got their tea,
Cannot with that be satisfied,
But stuff and eat all night beside.

"It's what, I assure you, I don't allow,
I never did, and will not now;
If you want supper after tea,
You're not a man that will suit me."

Poor John he sat in great surprise,
Nor scarcely dared to lift his eyes,
Till roused from his sudden stupor,
He found he was allowed no supper.

A man that won't stand out for food,
That man, I'm sure, he is not good.
"I own," says John, "I did last night
Eat my supper by moonlight—

"I've been at sea now twenty years,
And never in that time did hear
Such work about a piece of beef—
You could say no more were I a thief.

"It is a rule which I have seen
In every ship that I have been,
If the master did not feel inclined,
Or to eat supper had no mind,

"He would tell his mate not him to mind
But get his supper when inclined;
But you, you take your bread and cheese,
Your porter, grog, and what you please.

"You go to bed, all night you sleep,
Whilst I on deck the watch must keep;

Now, I will ask you, if you please,
If to sleep all night needs bread and cheese,

'Must I not, think you, hungry be,
That walks the deck all night at sea?
Stare not, nor in a passion be,
Nor cast your angry looks on me—

"I'll tell you plainly, once for all,
You need not shout, nor need not bawl;
Put your beef by, and mind you lock it,
And keep the key safe in your pocket.

"For if you don't I vow and swear,
I'll have my meat while I am hear."
"That won't be long, this voyage, no more,
Then you may hand yourself on shore."

"Don't be alarmed, I'll go no more,
Much sooner would I go on shore,"
John takes his hat, on deck he goes,
And thus you see the scene they close.

This is a specimen, you hear,
Of what a mate has got to bear;
But mind, I do not mean to say,
That all mates are served in this way.

The wind keeps fair, we jog along,
Some half asleep, some hum a song;
The word from aft a good look out to keep,
They reply, "Aye! aye!" though half asleep

Nothing particular did to us befall,
On the fifth day we got to Blackwall;
We saved our market, too, that day,
As from the Nore our papers went away.

Next day into the Pool we went,
We moor'd our ship, and our sails unbent,
We dried our warps and cables too,
Before we coiled them below.

Next day we received on board a vat,
We are meter'd you may known by that;
We lift out boat, set her athwart,
And get all ready for a start.

The cook his baskets overhauling,
Some wants straps and some wants marling;
On board comes the basket man and crew,
The meter's man hauls at the bow.

"Master, mate, come get your ladder ready,
Pray, sir, hang it well and steady,
That no serious disaster
May happen to my master!

The ladder fast, up comes the meter,
Followed close by his man Peter;
The master pass'd the morning compliment,
When they down in the cabin went.

"Let me see, sir, you've got Russell's in,
Have we got craft here to begin?"

'Yes, sir, the lighterman just now
Has brought a craft unto the bow."

'Pray, sir, what may be your cockett?
But stop, I've got the turn bill in my pocket.
"This time, sir, we have taken in more,
By far, then ever we did before."

"Well, sir, there is not a doubt,
If the coals are in they will come out;
But those cursed imperial vats, I say,
Are fifty pounds per year out of our way.

Believe me, sir, as I do live,
We cannot satisfaction give;
And then, you know, if we don't please,
We are deprived of our fees."

Well, sir, pray, do what you can,
You'll find me, I believe, a liberal man;
About your dinner, sir, pray name,
Whatever you choose, it's just the same!

To go on shore is my intention,
I'll send it off, if you but mention."
"Oh! anything—it matters not,
I'll be content with what you've got.

But if you really do intend
Something from the shore to send,
Say a chine of pork, or lamb and peas,
A beef-steak, or what you please.

Or boiled tongue and leg of mutton,
Or anything, sir, I'm no glutton!"
Self-interest, that ruling passion,
That's lately got so much in fashion.

Look at its weight it turns the scale,
When every argument will fail;
How frail is man, just now you see,
How liberal that man can be.

But if the reason you must know,
And what it is that makes him so,
He treats the meter with his dinner,
To make him still a greater sinner.

He thinks he the meter well must treat,
And he the merchant then will cheat;
If you but look, you sure must see,
It cannot his disposition be.

His kindness now is naught but gammon,
He heaves a sprat to catch a salmon;
Well, by this time, I think you're tired,
But I just write as you desired.

You told me to give a true description,
I've done it here without deception:
The captain's now returned on board,
His market basket is well stored.

He's got some lamb likewise some peas,
No doubt it will the meter please;

The mate the same may chance to taste,
Ere he will let it go to waste.

Our cook's quite busy, there's no doubt,
The galley's now turned inside out;
He will do his best, it's my belief,
To roast the lamb and boil the beef:

Likewise the peas and brocoli,
Before they to the table go;
A good large pudding, too, is made,
A constant thing in the coal trade.

I'll describe to you, as I am able,
The scene that's at the dinner table;
The cabin's small, in the first place,
A stout oak table does it grace.

A looking-glass stands in the centre,
Which faces you as you enter;
And this being the first working day,
The dirty table-cloth is put away,

And a clean cloth is then brought out,
Clean from the captain's house no doubt;
All things are now set in their place,
The cabin boy has washed his face.

The meter's summoned down, and then
He's followed by three lightermen,
Who, because they get the coals soon out,
Must live well, there is no doubt.

The captain and meter claim the chairs,
Two lightermen the locker shares;
Where will the third sit? you will ask,
Why, on the empty porter cask.

And I'm afraid that the poor mate
Will find no seat nor yet a plate;
But John with patience is so blest,
He'll take his dinner on his chest.

The captain looks and sees all right,
Is quite obliging and polite;
He hopes they'll no inviting take,
But, as at home, a dinner make.

He carves—he eats—and think by turns,
For a quick despatch his bosom burns;
He sees as clear as the sun's rays,
She will be all out in four days.

The lightermen they promise fair,
They know the money will be there,
With grog and dinner when they choose,
A chance that they will seldom loose.

Each man's now satisfied, they say,
And the dinner things are put away,
To make room for the rum and gin,
To have a glass ere they begin.

They take their grog—they talk and laugh
Some use a glass, and some a cup;

The turn bill is soon on the table laid,
And by each man it is surveyed.

The captain and lightermen now agree,
For he's told them what it is to be;
To work! to work! the word they pass;
The meter now must leave his glass.

The lightermen now leave the barge,
And go on shore, to the mate's charge;
The seamen they must swing and trim,
For it won't be done by him.

Thus you see each following day,
Just goes on in the same way,
Until the stocks begin to fail,
And they have drunk out all the ale.

I'll tell you now our cargo's out,
And glad I am, you need not doubt;
Would you believe, she's made no more
Than she has mostly done before.

The meter now may go away,
A single copper he won't pay,
He need not wait, it is no use,
He will get nothing but abuse.

Our ballast is now alongside,
We shall be ready by morning tide,
To have it in they've just begun,
Pat says, there is good seventy ton.

But Pat's word must not be taken,
For in that they're oft mistaken;
They're begging hard for a drop of gin,
Almost before they do begin.

The half-hour glass is set in motion,
To spell the hold, a real good notion;
It's what is termed very fair,
That each man trims his equal share.

And some of us will have, you know,
To get our stocks before we go;
Our ballast, now, it is all in,
Another scene I must begin.

We've hove our ship out of the tier,
And by good luck our anchor's clear,
Which very seldom is the case,
There's such confusion in this place.

Here comes our waterman and boy,
The constant man he does employ,
His name is Sam, a clever fellow,
But Sam sometimes gets a little mellow.

But that, you know, is nothing new,
For clever fellows often do:
It's now high water, the wind's at west,
We set our sails to do our best.

The wind is fair, and you must know,
Sam did ashore to Greenwich go.

A steady breeze, the river clear,
We went along—had nought to fear.

At night we brought up in Sea-Reach,
Furled sails and set the anchor watch;
Next morn, before the break of day,
The mate knock'd out to heave away.

The wind north-west, and a strong breeze,
By a reef we did our topsails ease;
The wind continuing still the same,
At night to Yarmouth Roads we came.

And when abreast of Caister Rails,
We brought her up and furled sails:
We've been here now a week to-day,
The wind's come fair, we're under weigh.

We have had a most unhappy time,
Which I can scarce describe by rhyme;
The beef! the beef!—O sad disaster!
Is the constant topic of our master.

The cook in troubled water swims,
He's watched as he the kettle skims;
The mate, poor man, the Lord preserve him
For, if he don't, I think he'll starve him.

We fore-mast Johns have sore to fight,
And still for breakast not a bite;
In the half-deck, when altogether,
We are discontent at wind and weather.

Come overhaul their chest to see,
How stand their stock of sugar and tea;
Our stocks of 'bacco, too, we fear,
Will soon be out, if we lay here.

Each man a sovereign had in London,
The place that sailors are so fond on;
And some that lead a regular life,
Has got good stocks to please his wife.

And some there are that have got none,
And still the soverigns are gone;
We have passed the Float and seen the Spurn
Flambro' Head will come in turn.

Our captain now seems better pleased,
The wind's at south, the pinch is eased:
He does expect, if all goes right,
She will be down to-morrow night.

Well, I'm thankful now, we're here at last,
At Fairlass' Crane we make her fast,
And will be there, I make no doubt,
Until the ballast is all out.

When that will be I need not mind,
For another ship I'll try to find;
To-morrow the wages will be paid,
And I'll bid adieu to the Coal Trade!

AN

ADDRESS TO SEAMEN,

ESPECIALLY

TO THE RISING YOUTH.

Those who have used the sea, and have attained the age of 60 or 70 years, must have observed a very great declension in all orders of seaman, both with respect to morals and discipline.

When the writer of this address first went to sea, masters had a great interest in the ships they commanded (being mostly owners or part owners) and generally had such a high sense of honour that no hardships or dangers appeared to them so formidable as an imputation on their conduct as seamen. Had they lost a ship, and it was supposed to be owing either to ignorance or carelessness, it was long before they were entrusted with the charge of another, or could prevail on any to venture friendly parts with them; so that the loss of a ship in those days frequently involved the loss of character, as well as the loss of property.

Few shipowners made insurance on policy, and such as did seldom insured half the amount of their interest. Masters at that time observed a dignified conduct, for though they slept less, and walked the deck more than any of the crew, when the ship was at sea, they seldom entered into any unnecessary conversation with the sailors; their mates were their confidants, and to them they committed the entire management of the ship while in port, or in a roadstead at anchor.

If they saw any occasion to reprove their mates, they did not do it in the presence of the men and boys; for they knew, had they done so, it would have lessened their authority. It was then the custom for mates to remain in the ship till they obtained the command of them, or of others; foremast men seldom continued less than one year, and there were many instances of their continuing seven or ten years.

As to the boys they were then more obedient to the men than they are now to the masters. They did not dare go on shore without the leave of the mate, and that could seldom be obtained more than once a week, half of them in the forenoon, and the other half in the afternoon. It is needless to say that they were obliged to be on board at the time appointed.

The oldest apprentice had a sort of delegated authority over his fellow-apprentices, and each one

and some part of the ship's stores under his particular care, which he was bound to have in readiness whenever called for; instead of blows or abusive language, the mates contrived to substitute shame and degradation, by assigning mean offices to such as were last in turning out, or otherwise backwards or unhandy, such as sweeping the decks, cleaning the boots, &c.; to avoid which the writer has fresh in his recollection the many hard races he has run (upon the mate knocking all hands out) to be among the first at the windlass falls.

To haul out the weather earing, when the topsails were to reef, to ship the first handspike and to cat the anchor, were objects contended for by men and boys, as points of honour.

To such discipline and subordination must be attributed the smallness of the number of ships then lost, compared with what now happens making every allowance for the increase of shipping.

It is lamentable to think how ships are now thrown away. With sea wind and hazy weather, we see them keeping near the land, and grappling for harbours, by which many with their crews are lost; when at such times, by keeping the sea a few days longer, they might have prevented such disaster; but what is more astonishing—a master who loses his ship through ignorance or carelessness finds little difficulty in obtaining another, without receiving any stigma from the public, or any apparent contrition on his own part.

To bring seamen back to that state of vigilance and care, so conspicuous in their forefathers, is the design of this address; and the writer enjoys no small degree of satisfaction in the consideration, that his plans (some years since executed) for lights in Hasbro Gatt, and at the Goodwin and Sunk Sands, have been the means, under Providence, of preventing the loss of many of their lives.

As the future prosperity or calamity of this country will very much depend on the virtues or vices of the rising generation, the writer hopes he need not apologize for earnestly exhorting them to stem the strong current of luxury and dissipation of the present day.

A growing contempt of religion and good morals seem to pervade the far greater part of mankind; and unless a very considerable reformation takes place, inevitable ruin will be the consequence.

Without religion there can be no solid virtue or good morals—no true honour. All the apparent good actions of bad men spring from mean selfish motives; that ferocity called courage too often kept up by artificial means

is in such men, like that of animals, devoid of reason; hence their commands are boisterous, fickle, and confused; in that state of mind there is great danger of their issuing orders the reverse of what they should do.

Good men encounter difficulties and dangers with rational courage; and such as are commanders, give their orders in a calm, cheerful, dispassionate manner, and their example animates and encourages all that sail with them.

The religion recommended to all (and of which all in every situation are capable) consists of sentiments of piety, and in reflection on the power and providence and goodness of God, and in actions corresponding therewith, better expressed by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to Titus;—"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The above quotation contains an epitome, or abridgement of the Christian religion.

Such sentiments and such conduct would give young men (who have nothing to depend on but their own merit) the fairest chance of preferment; and if it has been their loss to have had parents who either could not or would not give them a suitable education, they will have many opportunities of improvement while at sea and in port.

The famous circumnavigator, Captain Cook, served his apprenticeship in the coal and coasting trade, and acquired almost all his knowledge of books after he went to sea. He was a striking instance of the power of emulation, united with sobriety and an ardent application. His example is worthy the imitation of every seaman.

December, 1797.